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OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

July 23, 2008

Robert W. Healy, City Manager
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Ave
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: Cambridge Letter Longfellow Bridge

Dear City Manager Healy:

Thank you for your recent letter to Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) Commissioner Sullivan regarding repair activities on the Longfellow Bridge. Since inspections began last summer, DCR has been focused on public safety as its highest priority while maintaining vehicular, public transit, pedestrian and bicycle access across the bridge. DCR appreciates the cooperation it has received from Susan Glazer and Susan Klippenger from the Cambridge Planning and Transportation Departments in helping to coordinate communication, construction and traffic planning activities during this time. DCR looks forward to working collaboratively with the City of Cambridge and the Massachusetts Highway Department (MHD) on the planning, re-design and rehabilitation of the Longfellow Bridge in the next several years.

Additionally, for your information MHD, in consultation with DCR, is the agency responsible for the redesign and rehabilitation of the Longfellow Bridge. It is my understanding that the re-design effort is about 25% complete and the project consultant is finalizing the Draft Environmental Notification Form for submission to Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) in the future.

Below please find a brief synopsis of recent events and the corrective actions DCR has taken to address safety concerns until repairs are completed.

Chronology

As you know, since the Minnesota I-35 Bridge Collapse in August 2007, DCR and MHD have been conducting an aggressive inspection and repair operation on many of the state's bridges including the Longfellow Bridge. On Friday June 27, 2008 the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Regional Administrator Lucy Garliauskas contacted Commissioner Sullivan with several recommendations for DCR, regarding ongoing operations and emergency repairs to the Longfellow Bridge. FHWA had recently completed its review of the

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

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Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation

February 2008 draft load rating report prepared by Jacobs Engineering (Project Consultant) for the Longfellow Bridge and had questions about the content of the report.

FHWA is charged with the broad responsibility of ensuring that U.S. roads, highways, and bridges are safe. DCR also periodically consults with FHWA and their experts on technical issues, but does not receive financial support. Also, FHWA makes its expertise available and issues recommendations when requested by the Commonwealth.

As a result of FHWA's June 27th recommendations and in consultation with MHD, DCR engineering staff reviewed all options and accordingly, at the direction of the Commissioner, DCR took the following actions:

- Enlisted the assistance of the State Police to step-up enforcement efforts. Reviewed, replaced, and added signage as necessary.
- Revised weight limit posting signs for 20 tons or less and installed appropriate signage in accordance with FHWA standards. Established temporary detour routes for vehicles in excess of 20 tons on both the Cambridge and Boston sides of the Charles River.
- Revised the repair sequence. As recommended by FHWA, all zero-rated members will be repaired first and other structurally deficient members identified will be repaired at a later date. DCR will additionally continue to maximize the number of work crews working on these members from four to five crews per night plus two additional day crews.
- Ordered the inner lanes in both directions closed and barricaded effective 6AM on Saturday June 28, 2008.
- Directed the MBTA to reduce operating speed to 10 MPH to maintain public safety.
- Notified appropriate safety and transportation officials in Boston and Cambridge.

Update on Proposed Repair Schedule

- Current Conditions – All traffic prohibited from passing lanes and MBTA at 10 MPH.

- Upstream and Downstream- Zero capacity bridge elements to be complete by the end of July – MBTA may be able to increase speed (after supplemental rating report by Jacobs Engineering). Passing lane to remain closed to all traffic.
- Downstream – Deteriorated elements to be complete by middle of August – passing lane may be opened to statutory traffic (after supplemental rating report by Jacobs Engineering).
- Upstream - Deteriorated elements to be complete by first week of November – passing lane may be opened to statutory traffic (after supplemental rating report by Jacobs Engineering).

DCR has invested more than \$5 million worth of repairs since the 2007 inspection, including the installation and replacement of more than 250,000 pounds of structural steel. DCR expects repairs to continue into the fall season at an estimated total project cost of more than \$11 million.

Thank you once again for all of your assistance during the Longfellow Bridge inspection and repair process. Should you have additional questions, DCR would be happy to schedule a briefing with Cambridge City Engineers to discuss in detail the repair plan and the schedule for normalizing traffic operations.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 617-626-1478 or Rosemary Powers, DCR Director of Governmental Affairs at 617-626-4988.

Sincerely,



Jack Murray

Deputy Commissioner for Park Operations

cc: Rosemary Powers, Director of Governmental Affairs
Noel Baratta, Chief Engineer, DCR